



TRAINING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- Public health professionals are responsible for protecting and maintaining the nation's health. Working in every kind of community with varied access to necessary resources, the public health professionals are called upon to deal with changes as new discoveries identify better methods for maintaining the public's health.
- The 2002 Institute of Medicine Report, *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*, finds the U.S. public health workforce "insufficient and inadequately trained." At state and local public health agencies, diminishing resources have led to smaller staffs responsible for expanding jobs, resulting in less time and money for training and professional development.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

Over the last decade CDC has worked to develop a national distance learning system comprised of people, technology and funding to train public health workers in all disciplines. These systems include the National Laboratory Training Network (NLTN) and the Public Health Training Network (PHTN). NLTN provides clinical, environmental, and public health laboratory training exercises to laboratory professionals on over 20 topics of public health significance around the country, such as newborn screening, antimicrobial resistance, food safety, genetic testing, and quality assurance for laboratory testing.

PHTN is a public-private partnership dedicated to bringing high-quality adult learning opportunities to the learner anywhere at anytime. PHTN programs are marketed to clinicians and other public health populations and offered in multiple delivery formats, including satellite, Web-cast (live and Web-archive), phone bridge, CD-ROM, videotape, pdfs, and other downloadable print-based materials.

Example of Program in Action

Within days of recognizing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) as a global threat, PHTN began a series of live satellite Web-based broadcasts presenting critical information about the diagnosis, treatment, control, and prevention of SARS. These programs were viewed by an estimated 400,000 health professionals. PHTN allows CDC to address global health issues at the point of origin as well as at home. For example, working through the Ministry of Health in Beijing, China, CDC delivered master video production tapes for rapid translation into Chinese. These programs were then rebroadcast within China and distributed as CD-ROMs to all health departments in China's 23 provinces. It is estimated that 1.8 million Chinese health professionals have received critical SARS information through translated CDC PHTN programs and CD-ROMs.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to pursue the highest standards for laboratory training and distance learning in traditional and emerging technologies, and to identify and promote best practices in adult and technology supported learning.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

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